

An

Inaugural Dissertation

on

"Cholera Infantum"

for the Degree of M.D.

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by Frederick Steier

~~Perseus Steier~~

of Lancaster, Penna

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The diseases of children form one of the most important class of maladies. - They are not only numerous, but generally altogether distinct in their nature and appearance from those diseases which affect persons of matured age. - They are moreover unquestionably more perplexing to the practitioner than the disease of adults. - I have selected one of the complaints incident to infancy, for the subject of my Inaugural Dissertation. -

- The "Cholera Infantum" a disease which is rapid in its progress, and of extreme fatal tendency! - As it cannot be presumed that a person of my age - one who is just entering upon the arduous duties of the medical Profession, has much, or indeed anything new to communicate of a practical nature. - It will I hope not be expected that I should give much more than what I find in books on this subject & what I have learned from the valuable Lectures of Professor Chapman. -

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"Cholera Infantum".

The disease which has received the name of "Cholera Infantum" is characterised by the following symptoms - copious discharges both upwards and downwards, with pain, gripings, and spasm - The late "Dr. Rush" has given us so full and perfect a description of this disease that it were useless to attempt one myself - I shall therefore give the Doctors account of the appearances of this disease in his own words -

"It affects children from the first or second week after their birth, till they are two years old - It sometimes begins with a Diarrhoea which continues for several days without any other symptom of ^{the} disposition - but it more frequently comes on with a violent vomiting and purging and a high fever - The matter discharged,

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from the stomach is generally yellow or green,
but the stools are sometimes slimy and bloody,
without any tincture of bile - In some instan-
ces they are nearly as limpid as water -

Worms are frequently discharged in each kind
of the stools that have been described - The
children in this stage of the disease appear
to suffer a good deal of pain - They draw
up their feet, and are never easy in one
posture - The pulse is quick and weak,
the head is unequally warm, while the
extremities retain their natural heat, or
incline to be cold - The fever is of the
remitting kind, and discovers violent
exacerbations especially in the evenings -

The disease affects the head so much,
as in some instances to produce symp-
toms not only of delirium, but of mania
inasmuch that the children throw their
heads backwards and forwards, and
sometimes make attempts to scratch,

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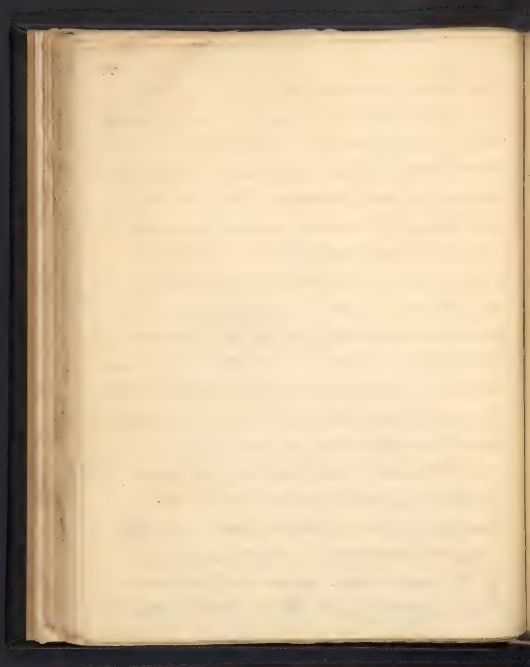
and to bite their parents - nurses - and even themselves - A swelling frequently occurs in the abdomen, and in the face and limbs - An intense thirst attends every stage of the disease -
The eyes appear languid and hollow, and the children generally sleep with them half closed - Such is the insensibility of the system in some instances of this disease, that flies have been seen to alight upon the eyes when open without exciting a motion in the eyelids to remove them - Sometimes the vomiting ceases, without the purging, but more generally, ^{the purging} continues without the vomiting throughout the whole course of the disease - The stools are extremely foetid, but in some instances they are without smell, and resemble snicks, and aliments which have been taken into the body - The disease is sometimes fatal in a few days - I once saw it carry off

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a child in twenty four hours - The duration
is varied by the season of the year, and by
the changes in the temperature of the weather.
A cool day frequently abates its violence, and
disposes it to a favourable termination -
It often continues with occasional remis-
sions for six weeks or two months -
Where the disease has been of long contin-
uance, the approach of death is gradual,
and attended by a number of distressing
symptoms - An emaciation of the body,
to such a degree, so that the bones come
through the skin, livid spots, a singultus,
convulsions, a strongly marked Hippocra-
tic countenance; and a some months,
generally precede the fatal termination
of this disease - Few children ever recover
after the last symptoms which have been
mentioned make their appearance -

The Cholera Infantum generally makes its

appearance in the summer months, commencing
in July and continuing untill the cold weather
sets in - It appears to be a disease peculiar to the
United States, inasmuch as we do not find it
described in any European work - In cities
and towns it is much more prevalent than
in the country, and hence we trace its
connection with those impure states of
atmosphere which are always present in
the warm months in ^{populated} cities -

The opinion which is entertained by some
that it arises from irregularities in diet
and especially from the use of unripe
fruit would seem erroneous, when
we take into consideration, the facts
of its frequent appearance in the
country, where children have ready
access to all kinds of unripe fruit, and
of its appearance only at a particular
season of the year - For it certainly cannot



be supposed that irregularities in diet are only committed during those months of the year in which this disease generally prevails - There must be something in the state of the atmosphere, in the summer months, which predisposes to gastric affections - It is not a mere local disease of the prima viæ. the system I take it, is generally affected throughout - the disease falling upon those parts which have acquired a predisposition, either from some hidden cause floating in the atmosphere or from irregularities in diet.

The cholera although primarily a gastric affection is seen extensive sympathetically to the Nervous system -

The Predisposing causes are - a heated and impure atmosphere - and the Exciting cause one - whatever deranges the primæ viæ as irregularities in diet and clothing exposure to cold when the body is previously heated - It is aggravated when it occurs



During dentition -

Of the Treatment.

The Indication is 1st To evacuate the alimentary canal and 2^d to allay pain, and irritation and determine to the surface -

As it always commences with a derangement of the alimentary canal, our first views should be directed towards it -

As regards Emetics - they can often be dispensed with, as nature very often rids the stomach of its contents without the aid of artificial means - But in some violent cases, it becomes necessary to use them, and in this case Ipecacuanha is generally preferred - In the country it is not often necessary to recur to Emetics -

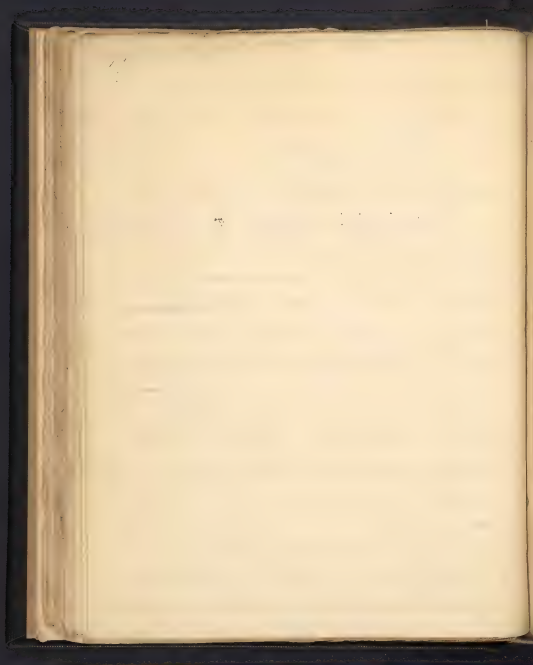
Purgatives - can never be dispensed with but there is some difference as to the choice of them - The Stomach being often

at other blow is mixed with the force, as
happens occasionally the Boston perhaps would
be preferable -

for it being retained when all others are
rejected -

extremely irritative, there should be several remedies
one not of opium - (alcohol often answers extremely well
from its being insipid - and can be given in a small bulk - which is of no small consequence -
kassoril - is often substituted for the laudanum -
but it is more apt to be rejected - and is not
sufficiently active - (a)

Dr Chapman has often used it with advantage -
a solution of Opium Valt (e) he thinks has a
tendency to allay the irritation of the Stomach
But where the irritation is so violent, that no
medicine can be retained we should promptly
commence to allay irritation by anodyne infu-
sions - or a supposition of Opium - and the
vesicating applications - But if the vomiting
is violent with pain of the abdomen - not skin
and muscle thro' the remedy can be superior
to the Linctus - Dr Chapman's opinion is -
that many lives are lost from the excessive
use of the Linctus - And is he not warranted in



surprising to find that even supposing it is not
 to be traced to previous inflammation? As the dis-
 ease appears in the country it seldom migrates
 the least it appears in a common rather form
 and is seldom fatal -

If ever we found that after P.H. - & the disease
 ever be found to retain Medicines, a it becomes
 stand against inhibition, if it be rejected a small
 quantity of Opium may be added -

The irritation being allayed in should not
 resort to those remedies, which restore
 the reacting action of the surface -

There is generally an unequal temperature -
 some parts being cold to the touch others
 warm, and the child appears to be in a
 more insensible state - the Temperature with
 some produces an equal temperature, and
 tends to cause the patient - For this purpose
 Flannel should be worn next the skin -

The disease after some time, is apt to recur

4. It is no doubt assistance by the improved state of
the atmosphere, the land being in a weak state
and the prevailing winds causing still cooling is sufficient
to produce frost here.

1. Such as above - Gally - Hino - &c.

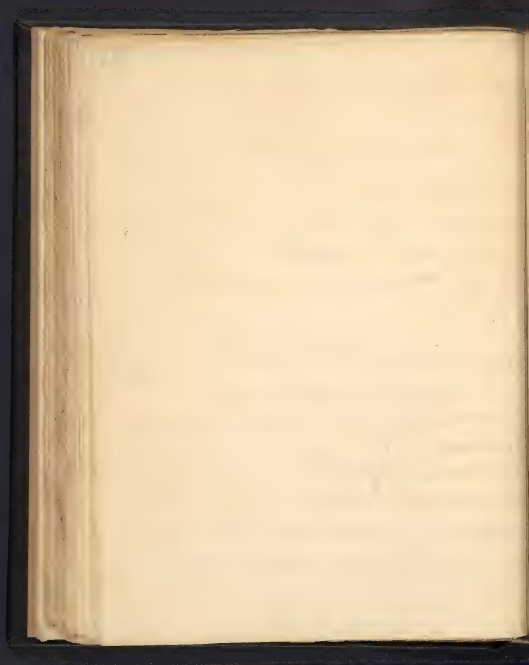
into Diarrhea, attended with tormina, tho' this is not a very common consequence in the country. [f] The remedies here commonly consist of Astringents. [k] and to relieve the gripings, injections of melted butter, pea-powder and saucidity are useful - or what is better anodyne injections - For suppressing Diarrhea the emaciating pulse, and a variety of Tonic are in use - Where much astringency is necessary Dr Chapman has uniformly preferred a strong infusion of the Dew-Berry root. -

Dr Physick in such cases uses an infusion of Hematoxylon. -

What I have principally seen used is the Hypericum perf. It is a very powerful astringent. It is made into a tincture by taking a few handfuls of the flowers, and infusing them in one quart of diluted alcohol - expose to the sun for six or eight days - a camphorball may be given at

a Race - and repeated energy. Live & there being according to circumstances. But we can use it only in working position. The Yoga circumstances is necessary, useful strings of air - a common subject, practitioners. Where the disease occurs in sitting the remedy to be depended on, and for which no other can be substituted, is a remedy to the country. It is certain that the impure air of India is a powerful obstacle to the survival and a powerful auxiliary in aggravating this disease. It is shewing from the fact, that when it appears in the country it is easily removed.

It is at this stage of the disease, that a German
Roller should not be neglected. This remedy was
first introduced by Dr Chapman - It should be
applied round the abdomen, and of a moderate
tightness - it imparts tone to the alimentary
canal and keeps up an equilibrium of tempera-
-ture. -



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Prophylactic Treatment.

After the disease is removed, we should guard against a relapse. — 1st By a proper diet. — The child should subsist principally on farinaceous articles, and where Milk enters as a principal ingredient.

I have known an Infant to subsist exclusively upon Milk and Barley water two weeks, having been previously much debilitated from refusing the Mother's breast, and from diarrhoea mixed with blood.

2^d Excess in eating and drinking should be carefully avoided. —

3^d Flannel should be worn next the Skin. —

4th Cleanliness should be observed, as it tends much to the comfort of the patient. —

Thus Gentlemen I have given a short
 account of the Symptom - Character - and Cure
 of "Cholera Infantum" - That it is an imperfect
 one I am very sensible of - Hoping however
 that it may be deemed sufficient for the task
 imposed on me in receiving the Honors of the
 University, I respectfully Submit it, "with
 all its imperfections on its head," to the
 ordeal that awaits it. —

